

size of the city of Chicago. The fire destroyed 32 homes and 4 rental cabins. Nearly 10,000 people were evacuated at one point, and the fire cost the taxpayers over \$100 million before it was finally extinguished. Unfortunately, it will likely cost double that amount for the necessary rehabilitation of the forests that needs to occur now. After a fire such as this, there is only a short opportunity to hasten forest rehabilitation, reduce risks of flooding, insect epidemics, and future fires, and capture at least some of the economic benefit from the dead and dying trees to help offset and pay for those restoration costs.

Given the urgent need for action, as I said, I am introducing today the Arizona Wallow Fire Recovery and Monitoring Act, joined by my colleague, JOHN MCCAIN, as an original cosponsor. This legislation would expedite the removal of hazard, dead, and dying trees in community protection management areas within the Wallow Fire area. The removal projects carried out under the act will be completed within 18 months of enactment. The reason for this timeline is that when it comes to timber harvesting of the fire-killed trees, the costs of delay are extreme. Fire-killed trees will lose more than 40 percent of their value in less than 2 years.

Due to the intensity, the size, and the magnitude of the fire, there is a tremendous amount of dead and dying trees within the Wallow Fire area. Portions of the forest that have burned pose a risk to forest users, to communities, and to private property and the remaining resources. These risks include the hazards of falling trees, erosion, flooding, reburns due to excess fuel loads, and insect infestation risk to the remaining live trees. Under these postfire conditions, timber salvage is a management tool to mitigate these risks, generate revenue and jobs, and put the forest on the road to recovery.

We saw the negative consequences of delay firsthand in Arizona after the Rodeo-Chediski Fire in 2002, which at that point had been our State's largest fire. Bureaucratic regulations and lawsuits so severely delayed salvage efforts that by the time the projects were cleared to proceed, the trees had lost most of their economic value. Congress should not stand by and allow this situation to be repeated.

That said, we are not looking to eliminate environmental safeguards or exempt timber harvests from Federal environmental laws. This bill is narrowly tailored, limiting the removal of hazard, dead, and dying trees to those trees located within community protection management areas. One of these areas includes the wildland urban interface and other areas critical to communities. In addition, a comprehensive hazard tree and commercial timber evaluation and an environmental assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, are required. All appeals and judicial

review would follow the processes in the bipartisan Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

The practice of postfire timber salvage may be controversial in part because there is limited scientific information on its ecological effects. Most of the scientific literature that does exist is based on forests in the Pacific Northwest. The forests in that part of the country are very different from the dry ponderosa pine-dominated forests that burned in the Wallow Fire. Thus, the bill would require monitoring for all timber removal projects implemented under the act.

Finally, from a fiscal perspective, there is never going to be enough Federal funding for the forest restoration work that needs to be done to save the forest that remains. Acknowledging this reality, this bill takes the proceeds from the timber removal project sales and keeps them on this forest to help pay for future forest restoration treatments.

This bill strikes a responsible balance between environmental concerns and economics after a catastrophic wildfire. I urge my colleagues to support its swift passage.

The Arizona Wallow Fire Recovery and Monitoring Act requires a comprehensive evaluation of the forest conditions and hazard tree and fire-damaged timber resources across the Wallow Fire Area; limits the areas where dead and dying trees can be removed to Community Protection Management Areas; limits tree removal to hazard trees and trees that are already down, dead, broken or severely root sprung trees where mortality is highly expected; prohibits the construction of new, permanent roads; provides for an expedited, but thorough, environmental review of tree removal projects proposed in the Wallow Fire Area, including full public participation in the development of such projects; uses the processes for appeals and judicial review established in the bipartisan Healthy Forest Restoration Act; requires monitoring of the ecological and economic effects of timber removal projects; and authorizes the use of timber receipts to offset the costs of forest restoration.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 230—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT ANY AGREEMENT TO REDUCE THE BUDGET DEFICIT SHOULD NOT INCLUDE CUTS TO SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS OR MEDICARE BENEFITS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. FRANKEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. RES. 230

Whereas over 34,000,000 retired workers currently receive Social Security benefits in

amounts that average a modest \$14,100 a year;

Whereas, in 2008, 23 percent of retired workers receiving Social Security benefits depended on those benefits for all or almost all of their income;

Whereas according to AARP, Social Security benefits kept 36 percent of seniors out of poverty in 2008;

Whereas reducing Social Security benefits would cause many seniors to have to choose between food, drugs, rent, and heat;

Whereas 95 percent of seniors in the United States, who numbered almost 37,000,000 in 2008, got their health care coverage through the Medicare program;

Whereas without Medicare benefits, seniors, many of whom live off of Social Security benefits, would have to turn to the costly and uncertain private market for health care coverage;

Whereas the Social Security program and the Medicare program are extremely successful social insurance programs that permit seniors in America to retire with dignity and security after a lifetime of hard work; and

Whereas the Social Security program and the Medicare program help relieve young American families from worry about their own futures, allowing freedom of opportunity in America: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that any agreement to reduce the budget deficit should not include cuts to Social Security benefits or Medicare benefits.

SENATE RESOLUTION 231—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2011 AS "NATIONAL CHILD AWARENESS MONTH" TO PROMOTE AWARENESS OF CHARITIES BENEFITTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND RECOGNIZING EFFORTS MADE BY THOSE CHARITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS CRITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BURR (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 231

Whereas millions of children and youth in the United States represent the hopes and future of the United States;

Whereas numerous individuals, charities benefitting children, and youth-serving organizations that work with children and youth collaborate to provide invaluable services to enrich and better the lives of children and youth throughout the United States;

Whereas raising awareness of, and increasing support for, organizations that provide access to healthcare, social services, education, the arts, sports, and other services will result in the development of character and the future success of the children and youth of the United States;

Whereas the month of September, as the school year begins, is a time when parents, families, teachers, school administrators, and communities increase their focus on children and youth throughout the United States;

Whereas the month of September is a time for the people of the United States to highlight and be mindful of the needs of children and youth;